

DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative

April 1, 2010

Dear Members:

The DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative posted the following comments on the Common Core State Standards Draft. These comments are aligned with the work we have done here in Washington on our local education standards, as well as the research and on the ground work of our Arts Education Initiative. As you can see from our statement, we believe the standards as they are currently drafted a major step forward. However, we believe the arts should play an even larger role in effectively teaching reading and math.



If you have additional comments, you can link to a survey at <http://www.corestandards.org/Standards/K12>.

Thank you for your continued support.

Jeff Travers

D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative
Supports Increased Role for the Arts in Voluntary State
Common Core Standards Initiative

Washington, D.C- The D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative called for an expanded role for the arts in the Voluntary State Common Core Standards Initiative but noted the current draft represents an important step forward for the integral role of arts in education.

The standards suggest the ways in which language mastery involves knowledge of other subjects such as art and music, in addition to literature, and indicates that these subjects should be included in class time devoted to literacy.

The proposed Common Core State Standards coordinated by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, state that the standards "must be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum, including a rich blend of stories, drama, and poetry as well as informational texts from a range of content areas."

The D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative has long advocated for rigorous standards in the arts as a core academic subject and is committed to advancing the role of the arts in transforming learning so that it is engaging and challenging and contributes to the healthy development of the whole student.

"We look forward to the voluntary adoption of a set of rigorous standards for all of the arts and trust that any development of accompanying sample curriculum developed by the States Common Core Initiative will demonstrate the key role arts can play in accelerating learning in all subjects," said Jeff Travers, president of the D.C. Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative.

"We have seen a narrowing of the curriculum over the last decade at a time when the demands of an information-based economy call for a well-rounded graduate with a grasp of academic literacy across the curriculum, a goal that arts infusion in education can help achieve," he said.

Arts in education can have a particularly positive impact on students most at risk, playing an important role in helping to close the achievement gap, and it is therefore essential that they are accessible to all students. The adoption of a common core that stresses high levels of arts education will help accomplish this goal.

The current draft of the common core standards reflects a recognition that higher-order thinking skills and content mastery, both supported by arts in education, are not mutually exclusive but are inter-dependent and both critical to a high standards-based education. In addition, the D.C. Collaborative encourages an expanded list of illustrative texts that is even more inclusive of a variety of perspectives from multiple cultures.

Because learning takes place among students both inside and outside of the classroom, increasingly involving technology enhanced media featuring video, audio and design components, it makes sense for policymakers, administrators, and practitioners to share a set of standards across multiple artistic mediums as soon as possible in their goal to support learning.